

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

- 1 1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing a composite material comprising mixing at least one natural fiber, at least one polyolefin polypropylene resin, and at least one functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent to provide said composite material; wherein said functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent possesses a molecular weight distribution of greater than 2.5 (M_w/M_n by GPC) and comprises a base polyolefin polypropylene resin that is grafted with a total of more than about 1 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams of functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent.
- 1 2. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural fiber is selected from the group consisting of wood flour, wood fiber, and agricultural fiber.
- 1 3. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural fiber is selected from the group consisting of wood flour, wood fiber, hemp, flax, and kenaf.
- 1 4. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the natural fiber is employed at a level in the range of from about 20 to about 85 weight % based on the total formulation weight of the composite material.
- 1 5. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the base polyolefin polypropylene resin is grafted with a total of more than about 5 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams of functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent.
- 1 6. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the base polyolefin polypropylene resin is grafted with a total of more than about 10 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams of functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent.

1 7. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the polyolefin polypropylene resin is a
2 polypropylene copolymer comprising a major proportion of propylene combined with a minor
3 proportion of a second monomer selected from the group consisting of ethylene and C₄-C₁₆
4 monomer materials.

8. (Deleted)

1 9. (Currently Amended) The process of claim 1 wherein the polyolefin polypropylene resin is
2 polypropylene homopolymer.

10. (Deleted)

1 11. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the polar monomer is selected from the group
2 consisting of ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acids, ethylenically unsaturated carboxylic acid
3 anhydrides, and derivatives of the foregoing.

1 12. (Original) The process of claim 11 wherein the polar monomer is selected from the group
2 consisting of maleic acid, fumaric acid, itaconic acid, crotonic acid, acrylic acid, methacrylic
3 acid, maleic anhydride, itaconic anhydride, substituted maleic anhydrides, and derivatives of the
4 foregoing.

1 13. (Original) The process of claim 1 wherein the polar monomer is maleic anhydride.

1 14. (Currently Amended) A composite material prepared by a process comprising mixing at least
2 one natural fiber, at least one polyolefin polypropylene resin, and at least one functionalized
3 polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent to provide said composite material; wherein said
4 functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent possesses a molecular weight distribution
5 of greater than 2.5 (M_w/M_n by GPC) and comprises a base polyolefin polypropylene resin that is
6 grafted with a total of more than about 1 mmole of at least one polar monomer per 100 grams of
7 functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent.

1 15. (Currently Amended) A composite material comprising at least one natural fiber, at least one
2 polypropylene resin, at least one functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling
3 agent, and at least one lubricant selected from the group consisting of fatty acid amides and fatty
4 acid esters; wherein said functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent possesses a
5 molecular weight distribution of greater than 2.5 (M_w/M_n by GPC) and comprises a base
6 polypropylene resin that is grafted with a total of more than about 1 mmole of at least
7 one polar monomer per 100 grams of functionalized polyolefin polypropylene coupling agent.